

Ruth Hall

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Interviewer: John Hughes

Discussion in progress— of someone's ashes?

JH: Oh, that's why I couldn't find anything in Santa Rosa newspapers or records.

RH: I was born in Southern California and only two years old when we came to Sausalito.

JH: Your grandfather died in 1905 in Los Angeles on 29th Street!

RH: Mother told this story when father was 17 or 19 years old—he went to the Mother Lode country, he didn't want to be a miner but he needed a job and did cooking for a camp of men and grandfather was a Methodist minister, what they called a circuit rider, he lived with various families. Grandfather was upset and went up to see him and dad refused to come home, they had a fight.

My grandmother? Ida Hall she was very straight laced, we were a very close family. My dad was a cub reporter for the Los Angeles Times. He wrote about LA when it started to grow from desert country to this time. He was an excellent reporter and photographer.

JH: How long was he involved with Burbank's books?

RH: He read some of Dad's articles and invited him to come up. He told a story of Burbank—it was visitors and a group of women were there, "What a pretty blossom", holding it in her hand. Burbank stopped her and said "Excuse me please may I just see it, it's the first bloom of this plant and I haven't seen it yet". He didn't rant or rave – he was a kind man.

JH: He was an observer, a keen sense of observation, he could retain like 300-400 experiments in his head at the same time. He'd remember the seasons, take seed from plant next year, he'd plant, hybridize -- some with his walnuts. His peers didn't care for that, they wanted everything written down.

RH: I know from Dad, he just loved him—called him Chief. He loved his philosophy. He'd say "Are you tired? Just go out and lie on the ground, don't have anything under you, just feel the strength from the earth."

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JH: During his last years there was a controversy about his religion, the Press (Press Democrat Santa Rosa paper) put him in a position to defend himself. Then the S.R. trying to get Claussen to do something about National Flower, as we are the only nation in the world who don't have a national flower. N me feel since the Shasta Daisy was created here and it is unique to the US, has Japanese, German & English flowers in it.

RH: Going back to where grandfather is buried, I know Burbank was buried under a tree. I'm sure that period after Burbank's death—had Mrs. Burbank's permission.....not understandable.

JH: This was found on the farm in Sebastopol under a huge walnut tree 100 years old. When I shook it I thought it was seeds---a machinist drilled these holes, didn't know what it was, looked like kitty litter---then I rubbed the mud off the box and found the name.

RH: Dad was always doing things like this; sounds like something he would do for humor. I never thought where grandfather was buried. Here I am confronted with this and I don't know what to do. I haven't contacted any of Dad's relations since he died because we had that upset over the will. I doubt anyone is living—cousins in Sausalito.

JH: There was a Burbank get together last year. People came from all over the state. A contingent of Burbanks up around Tomales because the family that Burbank was from had 16 or 18 children. Mrs. Burbank (Sr) had 13 children by Mr. Burbank (Sr) and he had several from his first wife. There is a newsletter that goes all over the N.S. and Luther was part of that, he had step brothers who lived in Two Rock where he stayed when he first came here in 1890 when he got off the train with a sack of potatoes.

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